

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00
PM-05 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01
PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 SSM-03 /095 W
-----087387 062010Z /45

R 061520Z JAN 78
FM AMEMBASSY DAKAR
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2291
INF RUTAIJ/AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN 7746
USINT BAGHAD
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

S E C R E T DAKAR 0136

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PDEV, SG, XF
SUBJECT: SENGHOR INITIATIVES ON MIDDLE EAST: SUPPORT FOR SADAT
AND PLO-ISRAELI MEETING IN DAKAR

REF: (A) 77 DAKAR 7682, (B) DAKAR 0009, (C) 77 DAKAR 7727,
(D) TEL AVIV 104, ALL NOTAL

1. SUMMARY: SENEGALESE PRESIDENT SENGHOR IS URGING SYRIA
AND IRAQ TO SUPPORT EGYPTIAN PEACE INITIATIVES, AND IS
TRYING TO ARRANGE DAKAR MEETING BETWEEN PLO AND ISRAELIS.
IT IS NOTEWORTHY THAT SENEGALESE SCRUPULOUSLY AVOIDED PUBLIC
PRAISE FOR SADAT UNTIL AFTER SENGHOR RETURNED FROM MID-
DECEMBER PERSIAN GULF FUND-RAISING TRIP. BY AGREEING TO
PLO OFFICE IN DAKAR AND MEETING WITH ISRAELI LEADERS IN
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EUROPE, SENGHOR HAS LONG SOUGHT INTERMEDIARY ROLE IN
PROMOTING CONTACTS BETWEEN ISRAELIS AND PALESTINIANS,
AND, IN WAKE OF RECENT EVENTS IN MIDDLE EAST, HE IS
CLEARLY ITCHING TO TRY AGAIN. END SUMMARY.

2. DURING NATIONAL ASSEMBLY RECEPTION JANUARY 5,
PRESIDENT SENGHOR TOLD GROUP OF AMBASSADORS THAT HE HAS

TAKEN FOLLOWING ACTIONS CONCERNING THE MIDDLE EAST
PROBLEM:

A. HE HAS CONTACTED SYRIAN AND IRAQI HEADS OF
STATE AND RECOMMENDED THAT THEY SUPPORT SADAT'S NEGOTIATING
INITIATIVE. HIS ARGUMENT IS THAT SADAT HAS DEMONSTRATED
COMPLETE ADHERENCE TO THE FUNDAMENTAL ARAB LINE WITH
REGARD TO OCCUPIED TERRITORIES AND THE LEGITIMATE RIGHTS
OF THE PALESTINIANS. SINCE SADAT IS SAYING WHAT ALL THE
OTHER ARABS ARE SAYING, IT IS ILLOGICAL FOR THE OTHERS
TO REMAIN ON THE SIDELINES. THEY SHOULD JOIN SADAT IN
NEGOTIATING WITH ISRAEL SO AS TO RECONSTITUTE THE ARAB
SOLIDARITY FORGED AT RABAT.

B. SENGHOR IS ATTEMPTING TO ARRANGE A MEETING BETWEEN
PLO AND ISRAELI REPRESENTATIVES IN DAKAR. HE SAID THAT
DR. SARTAWI OF PLO IS EXPECTED TO ARRIVE IN DAKAR WITHIN
NEXT FEW DAYS. HE DID NOT MENTION WHO POSSIBLE ISRAELI
REPRESENTATIVE MIGHT BE.

3. COMMENT I: SENGHOR'S NEW EFFORTS TO GENERATE SUPPORT
FOR EGYPTIAN INITIATIVES FOLLOW HIS EARLIER MESSAGE OF
SOLIDARITY TO PRESIDENT SADAT (REF A) AND HIS PUBLIC
PRAISE OF SADAT'S "COURAGE" AND "AUDACIOUS IMAGINATION"
ON DECEMBER 31 (REF B). IN YEAR'S-END ADDRESS TO
NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, PRIME MINISTER DIOUF ALSO LAUDED
"POLITICAL COURAGE" OF SADAT, WHO, "BRAVING THE MOST
TENACIOUS PREJUDICES, DID NOT HESITATE TO GO,
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AS A MAN OF GOOD WILL, TO JERUSALEM TO SEEK ISRAELI-
ARAB PEACE." DIOUF WENT ON TO EMPHASIZE THAT SENEGALESE
POLICY WAS GUIDED BY PRINCIPAL OF RECOVERY OF PALESTINIAN
NATIONAL RIGHTS. SOME OF THIS PROBABLY RESULTED FROM
U.S. DEMARCHE REPORTED REF A, BUT MOST SALIENT FACT
IS THAT SENGHOR FELT OBLIGED TO WAIT UNTIL AFTER HIS MID-
DECEMBER FUND-RAISING TRIP TO PERSIAN GULF (REF C) AND
UNTIL INITIAL REACTIONS WERE IN BEFORE PUBLICLY COMMITTING
HIMSELF (AND RATHER IMPLAUSIBLY ATTRIBUTING EARLIER
SILENCE TO FEAR THAT BEGIN WOULD NOT BE EQUALLY IMAGINATIVE
AND COURAGEOUS--REF B). SOMEWHAT SIMILAR
PHENOMENON OCCURRED WHEN SENEGAL FELT OBLIGED TO VOTE FOR
1975 ZIONISM-AS-RACISM RESOLUTION WHEN IT CAME UP ON EVE
OF SENGHOR'S LAST MIDDLE EAST TRIP.

4. COMMENT II: SINCE LEADING 1971 OAU WISE MEN'S
MISSION TO MIDDLE EAST, SENGHOR HAS SOUGHT TO PLAY ROLE
AS COMMUNICATION CHANNEL BETWEEN ISRAEL AND PALESTINIANS; HE
LAID GROUNDWORK BY ALLOWING PLO TO ESTABLISH ITS FIRST SUB-SAHARAN
OFFICE IN DAKAR AND BY MEETING HIMSELF WITH FORMER PRIME MINISTER
RABIN IN 1976. SENGHOR'S U.S. LEGAL COUNSEL, DAVID MORSE,
MENTIONED TO ME AFTER HIS RECENT DAKAR VISIT THAT

SENGHOR WAS ITCHING TO GET BACK INTO MIDDLE EAST QUESTION
BY ATTEMPTING AGAIN TO ARRANGE MEETING BETWEEN ISRAELIS AND
PLO REPRESENTATIVES. (MORSE SAID HE HAD DISCOURAGED
SENGHOR FROM GETTING INVOLVED). THE "DR. SARTAWI TO WHOM SENGHOR
REFERRED IS ALY SARTAWI, WHO HAD HEADED PAST PLO DELEGATIONS TO
DAKAR. WE WONDER IF THERE IS ANY CHANCE THAT ISRAELI
REPRESENTATIVE WITH WHOM SENGHOR HOPES TO ARRANGE MEETING COULD
BE HISTADRUT OFFICIAL WHO REF D INDICATES WILL BE TOURING
AFRICA IN FEBRUARY.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MEETINGS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 06 jan 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978DAKAR00136
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780011-0060
Format: TEL
From: DAKAR
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780193/aaaadagr.tel
Line Count: 125
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 669a01e6-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 DAKAR 7682, 78 DAKAR 9, 77 DAKAR 7727, 78 TEL AVIV 104
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 22 apr 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3819611
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SENGHOR INITIATIVES ON MIDDLE EAST: SUPPORT FOR SADAT AND PLO-ISRAELI MEETING IN DAKAR
TAGS: PDEV, PLOS, SG, XF, (SENGHOR, LEOPOLD SEDAR)
To: STATE ABIDJAN
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/669a01e6-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014